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The influence of chronic pain on motor control of the cervical spine

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A complex array of cervical neuromuscular adaptations has been documented in patients with neck pain. These include both modification of cervical motor control as well as peripheral modifications including atrophy of specific muscle fibers and changes in muscle microcirculation.

Our progressive understanding of changes in cervical muscle function in the presence of neck pain has directed physiotherapy rehabilitation programs to include more specific therapeutic exercise regimes as a component of a multimodal intervention. Clinical trials of specific therapeutic exercise for the management of cervical disorders have shown that exercise reduces the symptoms of neck pain and headache and improves various parameters of muscle function which are known to be impaired in patients with neck pain. This presentation will highlight the role of therapeutic exercise in the management of patients with chronic neck pain disorders.